

Cut – but don't kill – solar

We ask that the Government urgently rethinks its proposed changes to solar energy policies. The cuts to support for solar outlined in the consultation threaten to strangle at birth a new industry that is providing thousands of new jobs, and bringing down the cost of clean, zero-carbon energy.

We recognise that both parties in the coalition have long championed the many benefits of householders and local communities generating renewable energy. The coalition parties played a big role in establishing the feed-in tariff in the last Parliament. This has been an enormous success, with over 100,000 installations since 2010 creating 25,000 jobs in the solar industry.

We also recognise that the costs of installing solar have fallen since the scheme began, and that tariff rates can and should be reduced. However, cuts of 50-70% for solar in less than two years are so much deeper than the reductions in cost that they place the future of the industry at very real risk. They are also being implemented so fast that companies are already seeing existing orders cancelled and future work dry up overnight – especially as the cut-off date for projects is before the consultation even closes.

The scale of the cuts – exacerbated by the deeper cut for projects with multiple roofs – threatens to stop projects the coalition has said it most wants to go forward. These include collective projects by housing associations and community energy groups, schemes that deliver the benefits of solar panels and reduced bills to those who would otherwise be unlikely to have the opportunity to take advantage of the feed-in tariff.

We therefore ask that

- the cut-off date for the introduction new tariffs is extended so that there is time to complete projects which people have planned and invested in on the basis of existing support rates.
- the feed-in tariff budget is topped up. We recognise that money is tight, but recent budgets have found money to delay fuel duty increases and fund other waste collection initiatives.
- a new system is established to drive down feed-in tariff rates, but in a planned way that relies on evidence of reducing costs, not a series of stop-start lurches that are devastating to those trying to build businesses and create jobs in the industry.
- housing association, council, school, and other projects where the revenue is recycled back into the community are excluded from the lower aggregated or multi-roof tariff.

In X constituency/town/area this would mean: *Please summarise locally relevant evidence here, with the main local impacts of the proposals, and how they benefit from the feed-in tariff.*

Signed
(Organisations, Councils, MPs)

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Head of Policy and the Regions
Co-operatives UK

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Group Chief Executive
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Southampton City Council

The full Cabinet
Reading Borough Council

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Didsbury Park Properties

Urban Splash

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Paul Goggins MP	Kerry McCarthy MP	Jessica Morden MP
Mary Creagh MP	Andrew Gwynne MP	Joan Ruddock MP
Valerie Vaz MP	Graham Allen MP	Jim Dowd MP
Gerry Sutcliffe MP	Lisa Nandy MP	Julie Hilling MP
Gordon Banks MP	Paul Murphy MP	Sandra Osborne MP
Dave Anderson MP	Ben Bradshaw MP	Hugh Bayley MP
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